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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000172

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [EG](#) [KISL](#) [OFDP](#) [OVIP](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#) [SA](#) [SY](#) [KO](#)

SUBJECT: OIC OFFICIAL ON KOSOVO ATTENDANCE/RECOGNITION AND
PHILIPPINES OBSERVER STATUS AS DAMASCUS MINISTERIAL
APPROACHES

REF: A. JEDDAH 0166

[1](#)B. JEDDAH 0165

[1](#)C. JEDDAH 0163

[1](#)D. RIYADH 0588

[1](#)E. RIYADH 0590

[1](#)F. 08 JEDDAH 0417

Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: According to an OIC official, a request for Kosovo to attend the May 23-25 OIC Ministerial in Damascus is still pending Syrian permission. Reasons behind Egypt's role in hampering Albanian efforts to pass a resolution on Kosovo recognition remain opaque while the role of Syria as conference chair may prove critical to the outcome of the Kosovo recognition resolution. An attempt by the Philippines to gain OIC observer status illustrates that the process for non-members is unclear. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) KOSOVO ATTENDANCE: According to OIC official Ufuk Gokcen (in recent conversations with Jeddah PolOff), Kosovo has asked to attend the annual OIC Council of Ministers meeting in Damascus and the OIC has supported its bid with the Secretary General asking the Syrian Foreign Minister last week at a private dinner to see if the Kosovars could be invited. The decision is still pending. Macedonia also asked permission to attend. Sri Lanka was earlier granted permission. Host approval and/or invitation is the main element determining whether a country attends an OIC meeting.

Gokcen reported that the OIC "requested it but the Syrians are not replying." Gokcen stated his sense that the Syrians are stalling on Macedonian attendance so as not to slight others while the question of Kosovo attendance remains open.

[1](#)3. (C) MURKY RESOLUTION APPROVAL PROCESS: Gokcen says that the Kosovo resolution definitely will be raised in Damascus at a Special Committee to debate all outstanding resolutions emerging from the preparatory meetings in Jeddah. Gokcen expects that the Special Committee chair will be Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Al-Meqdad. Following committee action, all resolutions will be presented to the plenary for adoption by consensus. Gokcen pointed out that while it is not typical, any minister may use this last opportunity to speak against a specific resolution, an action which could bring the plenary into a debate. Gokcen described the consensus approval as quick but murky -- a process in which members often have trouble recalling exactly when or how specific resolutions were passed.

[1](#)4. (C) EGYPT'S MOTIVATION NOT CLEAR: The Albanians submitted the resolution on Kosovo recognition at the May 4-6 Jeddah preparatory meeting, where Egypt was the only country that tried to block the initiative, using last minute maneuvers to try to prevent it from passing in its original form. Baffled

by Egypt's resistance to the Albanian resolution, Gokcen claimed to have "absolutely no idea" why Egypt is taking this position, but speculated that the "Sudan issue" or Egypt's ties with Russia might be factors.

15. (C) IMPORTANT ROLE OF SYRIA: Gokcen repeated that Syria played a constructive role during the preparatory meeting, adding that the chair (Syria) was quite democratic.⁸ At previous OIC meetings a forceful chair has been important in passing resolutions, ensuring that countries cannot single-handedly derail the process. The role of Syrian Deputy FM Faisal Al-Meqdad is thus integral to getting the Kosovo resolution passed in Damascus.

16. (C) BID BY PHILIPPINES FOR OBSERVER STATUS IN DAMASCUS: In a side development, the Philippines is campaigning hard to gain observer status at the OIC. While Article Four of the OIC Charter deals with the question of observer status, the "criteria" for acceptance are not defined. There has been a block on the entry of observers in recent years except in exceptional situations (such as Russia). The most likely scenario for approval would be a member country minister raising the issue and other members pushing it through by acclamation. There is a more remote possibility that a particularly bold minister might take to the floor and object. Currently, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Macedonia and Serbia have applied for observer status.

17. (C) COMMENT -- EGYPT THE WILD CARD: Gokcen did not venture an opinion whether Kosovo attendance would help/hinder the chances of Kosovo acceptance. Clearly, Syria has the power to allow Kosovo to attend and may be able to push the resolution forward if it sees fit. Egypt remains the wild card. It is not clear whether Egypt will push hard against

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the resolution, two weeks after it stood at the preparatory meeting in lone opposition. Egypt did not present solid counter arguments in Jeddah, noting only that "more time" was needed. In Damascus next week, Egypt will either have sharpened its arguments or decided to put up less resistance to recognizing Kosovo. END COMMENT.

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